

Story 1562 (1992 Tape 2)

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Tricks as the End of the World Approached

One day some of the friends of Nasreddin Hoca¹ were hungry for roast lamb. Knowing that the Hoca had a well-fed lamb, they decided to play a trick on him in order to eat some of that lamb. One of them finally suggested, "Let us go to Nasreddin Hoca and tell him that the world will end tomorrow. Whatever food or drink we have should be used today, for after today it will be of no use to anyone."

They all agreed to this plan, and so they went as a group to call on Nasreddin Hoca. When they reached his home, said, "Oh, Hoca, we have just discovered that the world will end tomorrow. We should eat and drink whatever food we have on hand, for it will be of no use after today."

"Very well," said the Hoca, "but what should we do?"

They replied, "Hoca, you have an excellent lamb. If it were roasted, it would make a fine meal for all of us."

¹A hoca is a preacher and the religious leader of a community. In pre-Republican times the hoca was also the community teacher. Separation of church and state in the Republic required that teachers be people of secular rather than of religious training. Nasreddin Hoca is Turkey's most popular comic folk character.

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After thinking about this for a moment, Nasreddin Hoca said, "You are probably right. Of what use will that lamb be after today?" So they took the lamb down to the river to wash it, and then they slaughtered it. Building a fire on the bank of the river, they placed the lamb over the flames to cook.

Because it would take quite some time for the lamb to roast, the Hoca's friends decided to swim in the river for a while. Leaving their clothes on the bank, they said, "Please watch our clothes while you are cooking the lamb, Hoca. We are going swimming."

"All right," said the Hoca. "I shall do that."

While his friends were swimming, the Hoca picked up garment after another and threw them into the fire as fuel with which to cook the lamb. By the time the swimmers came out of the water, their clothes had all been burned.

His friends asked, "Hoca, where are our clothes?"

Nasreddin Hoca answered, "You will no longer have any need for those clothes, for the world will end tomorrow. I used them as fuel to cook the lamb."